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## 2013 Reilly Center Forum

Jessica Leigh Thompson, Ph.D.  
Northern Michigan University

### What Makes an Interdisciplinary Team Work? Reflections from the Field

Thursday, October 3, 2013 · 3:30 pm · ND Room in La Fortune Student Center

Do you want to know what moves interdisciplinary research teams from piecemeal contributions to holistic heavy-hitters? Research teams across the country are struggling to secure funding and keep their competitive edge, but these teams need more than public speaking and public relations help, they need interdisciplinary inspiration, structure and tools for “collaborative muscle-building.” In this presentation Dr. Thompson shares insights for facilitating interdisciplinary teamwork based on her role in an NSF-sponsored research team studying climate change in Mongolia. From systems thinking to meta-discussions of how language and science is negotiated, different communication tools help to integrate diverse data and perspectives across our disciplinary cultures.

*Dr. Thompson recently joined the faculty in the Communication and Performance Studies Department at Northern Michigan University, previously she was an assistant professor in the interdisciplinary, Human Dimensions of Natural Resources Department at Colorado State University. In 2008, she published her first book, entitled, Interdisciplinary Research Team Dynamics: A Systems Approach to Understanding Communication and Collaboration in Complex Teams. She has published articles about interdisciplinary and multi-stakeholder collaboration in peer-reviewed journals including Science Communication, Environmental Communication, Journal of Applied Communication Research and Society & Natural Resources. Her current research and teaching focuses on communicating, educating and managing environmental conflict about complex ecological issues such as global climate change and natural resource conservation. She is the principal investigator on two multi-million dollar NSF-funded projects investigating the role of collaboration and communication in climate change research in the pasturelands of rural Mongolia and in America’s National Parks and Wildlife Refuges. She completed her doctoral degree in Communication at the University of Utah in spring 2007; she conducted an ethnographic investigation of an interdisciplinary climate change research team as they negotiated knowledge, science and power. During her graduate studies she also earned certificates in conflict resolution and facilitator training and an interdisciplinary certificate in Adaptive Management of Environmental Systems.*

**This event is co-sponsored with the Office of Research.**

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